DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 335 SO 024 214

AUTHOR Sherman, Janice; Thompson, Marlene

TITLE Reflections on Diversity: Implementing Anti-Bias Curriculum in the Primary Grades.

INSTITUTION North Dakota Univ., Grand Forks. Center for Teaching and Learning.

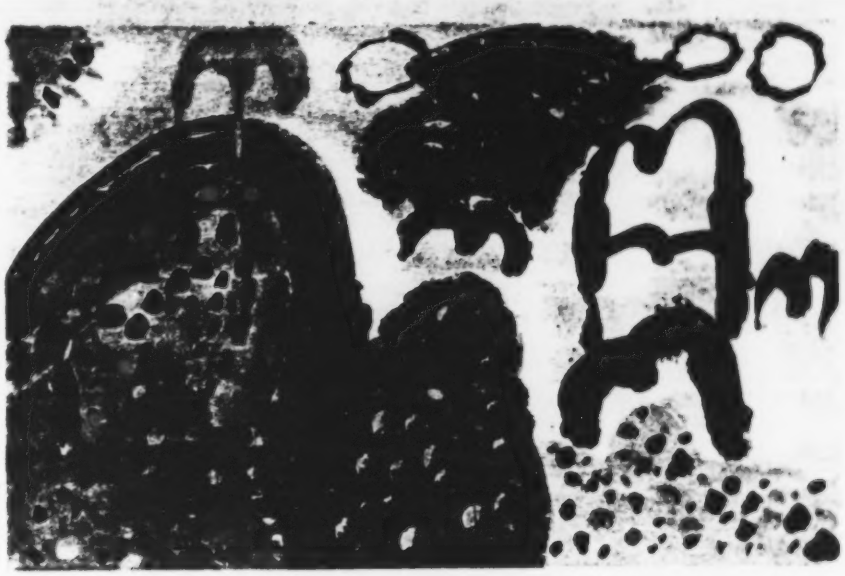
PUB DATE Mar 94
NOTE 11p.
AVAILABLE FROM Insights, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, P.O. Box 7189, Grand Forks, ND 58202-7189. ($7 per year).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Insights into Open Education; v26 n6 Mar 1994

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Activities; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Background; *Cultural Differences; *Cultural Pluralism; Kindergarten; *Multicultural Education; Primary Education; Student Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS Antibias Practices; Diversity Concept

ABSTRACT

Teacher-developed activities in one kindergarten classroom in Rogers (MN) are the focus for introducing diversity in primary grades. The process of planning the curriculum is described, along with a list of strategies to implement in the classroom for the school year. A set of persona dolls, one male and one female, were purchased to represent African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and European-American cultural groups. Funding for the persona dolls was obtained from the building principal who supported the ideas. By using persona dolls with multicultural literature and art activities, the students became more aware of cultural differences and similarities. A 37-item bibliography and a 12-item selected reference list are included. (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****



CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
GRAND FORKS 58202

Volume 26, Number 6
March 1994

ED 380 335

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Reflections on Diversity: Implementing Anti-Bias Curriculum in the Primary Grades

by

Janice Sherman and Marlene Thompson

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. M. Harris

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SO 024 214

INSIGHTS into open education

REFLECTIONS ON DIVERSITY: IMPLEMENTING ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

By Janice Sherman
and
Marlene Thompson

Introduction

Across the nation teachers of young children are recognizing the need to better prepare children to live happily and peacefully in an increasingly diverse society. They are finding creative, effective, and appropriate ways to do this through utilization of techniques and materials including persona dolls (dolls whose life stories are invented and told in the classroom), children's literature, skin tone art materials, photographic displays of diverse ways of living in contemporary society, etc.

Marlene Thompson, of Rogers Elementary School in Rogers, Minnesota, is a kindergarten teacher who has been working on development of an anti-bias curriculum project for a graduate level staff development course on Developmentally Appropriate Practice for teachers in the Elk River and Rochester, Minnesota, school districts. Marlene chose this topic for her project for both professional and personal reasons. Professionally, Marlene recognized the need to introduce the children in her classroom to people of color because of the limited ethnic and cultural diversity of the region where they live. In addition, the school where she teaches had selected a multicultural theme, *Be a World Citizen*, for the year, and Marlene wanted to work to assure that her multicultural teaching approach was integrated and relevant to the rest of the curriculum in order to avoid the "tourist" approach (Derman-Sparks and The ABC Task Force, 1989). Personally, Marlene was interested in this topic because she is the mother of two adopted Korean children.

Marlene set goals for her project in August after our first two class sessions had been held. She based her goal-setting on the knowledge she had gained from reading *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Children* (Derman-Sparks et al., 1989). During our last class meeting in January 1994, Marlene shared the success she has had in implementing her goals in her kindergarten with other primary-level teachers in the class. Marlene's process of goal setting and implementation of the goals can best be understood by reading excerpts from the journal which she turned in for her project.

Marlene's Story

8-5-93 entry

The first part of this paper will outline my plans for implementing anti-bias strategies. This is written in the summer when I have large blocks of time for reflecting and organizing my efforts. The second part will be written as a response after these activities have been implemented.

Strategies to implement during the 1993-94 school year:

1. Make my classroom more diverse. Display more photographs of people of color during their everyday lives. Goal–one half images should present diversity.
2. Purchase for art supplies–skin tone crayons, paper, and paint.
3. Include discussion of our anti-bias activities in weekly newsletter that goes home to parents.
4. Make a collage of eye shapes and colors. Graph eye colors in our classroom.
5. Make a book, "We All Look Special," using photographs and student descriptions of how they look.
6. Have students bring in pictures of family members. Talk about ways we look or don't look like other family members.
7. Use black and brown colors as desirable alternatives in the art center (paint, paper, and play-doh).
8. Get paint chips and sort by students' skin, eye, or hair color.
9. Read books that depict people of color in present day life in real life situations that would be interesting to kindergarten students. I have researched a beginning list which is attached.
10. My biggest concern is implementing these strategies in an integrated fashion that will connect to these students' interests and needs. To do this, I plan to integrate many of the activities around the theme of self-concept, which is a major social studies focus in our kindergarten. As they learn about themselves and each other, I hope to introduce and weave cultural diversity into the ongoing curriculum. To do this, I hope to use the persona doll technique as described in the text. However, we have no funds to purchase dolls, so I have written an Innovative Classroom Practices Grant at our district level. If that is not funded, I will substitute multicultural puppets which I do have available. As I don't have enough knowledge yet to write my own stories, I am going to choose published books as a beginning point for my doll's stories. Then, as we learn about other cultures through our schoolwide project, we can add stories and/or information about our dolls' lives. I want to start small so we can be successful. This will be our starting cast of dolls:
    - **Jamie** (White European boy from *Pumpkin Pumpkin* by J. Titherington). He will be introduced during our study of fall.
    - **Rosa** (Hispanic girl from *Something Special for Me* by Vera B. Williams). She will be introduced during our study of self-concept and our birthdays.
    - **Ling Sung** (Asian boy from *Cleversticks* by Bernard Ashley). He will be introduced during our study of self-concept and a discussion of our individual strengths.

- **Peter** (Black American boy from *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats). He will be introduced during our study of winter.
- **Jamaica** (Black American girl from *Jamaica's Find* by Juanita Havill). She will be introduced during our study of self-concept and friends.
- **Misty Dawn** (American Indian from *Misty Dawn*, published by St. Paul Public Schools). She will be introduced during our study of self-concept and our family.

The main emphasis I have planned will be to learn about racial differences and similarities. My hope is that the dolls or puppets will give the students new ideas and information and also provide a meaningful framework for discussions to solve any discriminatory behavior that occurs.

11. Finally, I would like to use the dolls to provide a connection for the students when we are exposed to cultural events and presentations during the school year. As we learn about foods around the world, we can make fry bread that Misty Dawn makes with her grandma, or breakfast tortillas (a favorite food of Rosa's), etc. Hopefully, this will make the experiences more real for these five and six year olds.

12-8-93 entry

As school started, I began to organize and teach the strategies I had planned during the summer. As I will be working on implementation all year, what I describe is only what has been achieved so far.

Our school had decided to have an alternative Halloween party this year and focus on our schoolwide multicultural theme. So in kindergarten we celebrated with a color parade. Our theme was "Kindergartners Like All Colors." We painted paper bag vests and stapled paper strip hats for our costumes. We included blacks and browns and tans along with all the other colors. We were an impressive sight. This activity served as an introduction to our study of self concept and likenesses and differences.

I have worked on activities 1-9 during our unit on self-concept and how we are alike and different. Instead of paint chips to depict skin colors, however, I purchased construction paper. This worked much better. It is difficult for kindergarten children to match skin colors, but the bigger pieces made comparison easier. Also when they had chosen their skin color, we used it to make construction paper faces. We made a bulletin board of faces, and the variety of skin colors chosen led to a great discussion of how much skin colors can vary.

The persona dolls became the largest area of focus for our anti-bias study. My principal liked the proposal and made the decision to allocate funds for the project. So I ordered a set of 10 dolls, a boy and a girl of each: African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and European-American. Then I looked again for books which would match the physical appearance of the dolls I received. The dolls were introduced as new classroom friends who brought a story to share about themselves. These are the characters we have so far:

Peter:

- African-American with a baby sister (Susie) and a mom and a dad
- books–*The Snowy Day* and *Peter's Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats

- has a dog named Willie
- lives in the city where there is snow
- celebrates Kwanza

Nicola:

- Asian-American with a big sister (Angel) and a mom and dad
- adopted and goes to kindergarten
- book–*Families are Different* by Nina Pellegrini
- has a dog named Buster

Ling Sung:

- Asian with a baby sister and a mom and dad
- book–*Cleversticks* by Bernard Ashley
- goes to school and tries to find what he does best (using chopsticks)

Misty Dawn:

- Native American with three brothers (Hayna, Kunu, and Dusty)
- has a mom and a dad and a dog named Radar
- book–*Misty Dawn* by St. Paul School District
- goes to kindergarten in St. Paul
- 6 years old
- makes fry bread with her grandmother

Olivia:

- African-American with a mom and a dad
- book–*Rachel Elizabeth Parker, Kindergarten Showoff* by Ann Martin
- has a cat named Rosie and a friend named Rachel
- goes to kindergarten
- celebrates Kwanza

Gilberto:

- Hispanic
- book–*Gilberto and the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets
- plays with a friend–the wind

These are the "friends" we have introduced so far. I had to make some adjustments because some of the dolls did not look like the characters I had originally planned. These dolls have been great so far, and as usual the children have extended my original ideas greatly. After we introduce the dolls, they become our new friends in the library center. They are treated as additional students in the classroom. The students read to them, play school with them, and make up games to involve them. One of the most popular is "Duck, Duck, Gray Duck." The boys play with them just as much as the girls. They notice when a friend is absent (they visit other kindergarten classrooms) and are patiently waiting to be introduced to the last four friends.

We used the dolls when we talked about physical likenesses and differences, partly because we don't have much diversity in our classroom, but also because it is less threatening to look at differences in dolls than in classmates. I know this through my own parenting experience. In first grade I remember vividly my Korean daughter telling me they had talked about colors of hair at school, and she was so embarrassed that the teacher pointed out she was the only one with black hair.

We have also started to use the dolls as connections for other events that happen in our schools. When the superintendent shared his slides from Central America, we talked about Gilberto and noted that his grandparents lived in Central America. When the media specialist did a presentation about Kwanza, we included the fact that Olivia and Peter celebrated Kwanza too. Hopefully this will provide more meaning to the students. When we do our multicultural unit on food in April, we can learn about one food which each of our friends enjoy. Hopefully this will prevent overgeneralizing which can sometimes lead to new stereotypes (such as all Asians eat with chopsticks; Ling Sung does, but Nicola doesn't, etc.). We continue to emphasize that differences are good. It continues to be a fun and exciting experience. And our theme will continue to be: "We're the same. We're different. That's what makes the world such fun. Many kinds of people, not just one!" (Sesame Street, 1992).

Conclusion

Marlene's story of growth and success is a reflection of many other primary-grade teachers who are trying to do a better job of incorporating anti-bias concepts into the curriculum in appropriate and meaningful ways. First grade teachers in Rochester who have incorporated the use of persona dolls for multicultural and handicap awareness curriculum report that children begin writing about the dolls in their journals and request to take them home for overnight visits. In the past several years, excellent resources have been published to help teachers develop strategies and locate materials which are multicultural, gender-fair, and handicap-aware. Some of these resources which teachers may find useful are described below:

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children (1989) by Louise Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force (National Association for Young Children, 1509 16th Street, Washington, DC, Phone: 1-800-424-2460). This book provides both underlying principles and methodology for implementing an anti-bias curriculum, which advocates social change so that the ultimate goal of developing every child to her or his greatest potential can be achieved. An excellent 30 minute video which gives an overview of what it means to teach with an anti-bias curriculum approach is also available (Pacific Oaks Bookstore, 5 Westmoreland Pl., Pasadena, CA 91103, Phone: 818-397-1330).

Including All of Us: An Early Childhood Curriculum About Disability (1984) by Froschl, Colon, Rubin, and Sprung of Project Inclusive is available from Gryphon House, Inc., 3706 Otis Street, Mt. Ranier, MD 20712. This book, which was originally designed with children aged three to five in mind, can also be useful to teachers in the early elementary grades as it provides suggestions of activities, approaches, and resources to expand children's experiences to include "nonstereotyped images and role models of people of color and people with disabilities." Many of the activities and strategies suggested in the guide center around use of "New Friend" dolls.

Multiethnic Children's Literature (1994) by Gonzalo Ramirez Jr. and Jan Lee Ramirez (Delmar Publishers Inc., 3 Columbia Circle, Box 15015, Albany, NY 12212-5015) was written to serve as a resource for educators "who wish to bring quality multiethnic literature to our children." The book provides grade level suggestions of literature for and about the four major

nonwhite populations in America–Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. Information about the history of multiethnic children's literature, guidelines for selecting appropriate multiethnic literature, and suggested activities to use with multiethnic literature are also provided in this useful text.

Developing Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs (1991) by Stacey York (distributed by Gryphon House, Inc., 3706 Otis Street, Mt. Ranier, MD 20712) provides suggestions to early childhood educators for providing classroom environments and activities that are responsive and sensitive to culture, gender, and handicaps. A trainer's guide (published in 1992) can be used with teachers to explore and expand their understanding of multicultural education.

Valuing Diversity: The Primary Years (1993) by Janet Brown McCracken (NAEYC, 1509 16th Street, Washington, DC 20036, Phone: 1-800-424-2460) was written specifically for primary-grade teachers. This brief, but thoughtful, book provides the essential information that teachers need for providing classroom environments, materials, and strategies which integrate and value human diversity.

Some Anti-Bias Books for Consideration for Kindergarten
Compiled by Marlene Thompson
January 1994

Books About African Americans
Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman, 1991, Scholastic.
Black Snowman by Phil Mendez, 1989, Scholastic.
Bigmama's by Donald Crews, 1992, Greenwillow.
Bright Eyes, Brown Skin by C. Hudson and B. Ford, 1992, Scholastic.
Cherries and Cherry Pits by Vera B. Williams, 1986, Greenwillow.
Corduroy by Don Freeman, 1968, Viking.
Jamaica Tag Along by Juanita Havill, 1989, Houghton-Mifflin.
Jamaica's Find by Juanita Havill, 1986, Greenwillow.
Mary Had a Little Lamb by Sarah Josepha Hale, 1990, Scholastic.
A New Dress for Maya by Malorie Blackman, 1992, Gareth Stevens Children's Books.
Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats, 1967, Harper & Row.
Rachel Elizabeth Parker, Kindergarten Show-off by Ann Martin, 1992, Scholastic.
The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats, 1962, Viking.
Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang, 1983, Greenwillow.
Wild Wild Sunflower Child Anna by Nancy Carlstrom, 1991, Scholastic.

Books About Asians
Cleversticks by Bernard Ashley, 1991, Crown Publishers.
Families are Different by Nina Pellegrini, 1991, Scholastic.
Lion Dancer by Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year by Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low, 1990, Scholastic.
Rise and Shine, Mariko-chan!, 1992, Scholastic.
Umbrella by Tara Yashima, 1958, Viking Press.

Books About Hispanics

A Chair for my Mother by Vera B. Williams, 1982, Greenwillow.
Gilberto and the Wind by Marie Hall Ets, 1963, Viking.
Music, Music for Everyone by Vera B. Williams, 1984, Greenwillow.
Something Special for Me by Vera B. Williams, 1983, Greenwillow.

Books About Native Americans or Alaskan Eskimoes

Eskimo Boy–Life in an Inupiaq Eskimo Village by Russ Kendall, 1992, Scholastic.
Mama, Do You Love Me? by Barbara M. Joosse, 1991, Scholastic.
Misty Dawn, Grant # G007901081, St. Paul Public Schools.
On Mother's Lap by Ann Herbert Scott, 1993, Scholastic.
Powwow by Linda Coombs, 1992, Modern Curriculum Press.

Books About People of All Colors

Bread Bread Bread by Ann Morris, 1989, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books.
Everybody Cooks Rice by Norah Dooley, 1991, Carolrhoda.
Friends by Rachel Isadora, 1990, Greenwillow.
Hats Hats Hats by Ann Morris, 1989, Lothrop, Lee a[illegible]rd Books.
Here Are My Hands by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archa[illegible], 1985, Henry Holt Publishing.
I Am Freedom's Child by Bill Martin Jr., 1987, DLM Teaching Resources.
People by Peter Spier, 1980, Doubleday.
Potluck by Anne Shelby, 1991, Scott Foresman.
We Are All Alike ... We Are All Different by Cheltenham Elementary School Kindergarten, 1991, Scholastic.

References

Ashley, B. (1991). *Clevertsticks*. New York: Crown Publishers.
Derman-Sparks, L. & The ABC Task Force. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children*. Washington, DC: National Association for Education of Young Children.
Ets, M. H. (1963). *Gilberto and the wind*. New York: Viking.
Havill, J. (1986). *Jamaica's find*. New York: Greenwillow.
Kates, B. J. (1992). *We're different, we're the same*. Sesame Street. New York: Random House.
Keats, E. J. (1967). *Peter's chair*. New York: Harper & Row.
Keats, E. J. (1962). *The snowy day*. New York: Viking.
Martin, A. (1992). *Rachel Elizabeth Parker, kindergarten show-off*. New York: Scholastic.
Pellegrini, N. (1991). *Families are different*. New York: Scholastic.
St. Paul Public Schools. (1982). *Misty dawn*. St. Paul, MN: Multicultural Resource Center, St. Paul Public Schools.
Titherington, J. (1990). *Pumpkin pumpkin*. New York: Scholastic.
Williams, V. B. (1983). *Something special for me*. New York: Greenwillow.

List of Publishers & Addresses:

Carolrhoda, 241 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN 55401
Crown Publishers, 225 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003
DLM Teaching Resources, PO Box 4000, One DLM Park, Allen, TX 75002
Doubleday & Co., 245 Park Ave., New York, NY 10167
Gareth Stevens Children's Books, 1555 North River Center Drive, Suite 201, Milwaukee, WI 53212
Greenwillow (Division of William Morrow), 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
Harper & Row, 10 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022
Henry Holt Publishing, 115 W. 18th St., New York, NY 10011
Houghton Mifflin, 1 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard (Division of William Morrow), 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
Modern Curriculum Press, Division of Simon & Schuster, 13900 Prospect Road, Cleveland, OH 44136
Scholastic, PO Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102
Scott Foresman, 1900 East Lake Ave., Glenview, IL 60025
St. Paul Public Schools, Multicultural Resource Center, 1930 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55109
Viking, 40 West 23rd St., New York, NY 10010

About the Authors

Janice Sherman is Associate Professor of Education at Winona State University-Rochester Center, in Rochester, MN. She collaborates closely with the Rochester public schools, having worked with over 200 teachers through her professional development course which meets in the schools. Recently she began similar work with the Elk River School District.

Marlene Thompson is a kindergarten teacher in Rogers Elementary School, which is part of the Elk River school system.

INSIGHTS

Center for Teaching and Learning
University Of North Dakota
PO BOX 7189
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7189

TO:

SUBSCRIBE TO INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS is published eight times during the academic year by the Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota.

Subscriptions are $7.00 per year payable by check or money order to INSIGHTS, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, PO BOX 7189, Grand Forks, ND 58202-7189. Editor – Sara Hanhan.